

UNAPPROVED MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION

March 16, 2011

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Salem, Virginia, was held in Council Chambers, City Hall, 114 North Broad Street, at 7:00 p.m., on March 16, 2011, there being the following members of said Commission, to wit: Terrance D. Murphy, Jimmy W. Robertson, Vicki G. Daulton, and Samuel R. Carter III (Bruce N. Thomasson- absent); with Terrance D. Murphy, Chairman, presiding; together with James E. Taliaferro, II, Assistant City Manager and Executive Secretary, ex officio member of said Commission; Melinda J. Payne, Director of Planning and Development; William L. Simpson, Jr., Assistant City Engineer; Benjamin W. Tripp, Planner; Judy L. Hough, Planner; and William C. Maxwell, Assistant City Attorney; and the following business was transacted:

ON MOTION MADE BY COMMISSION MEMBER ROBERTSON, AND DULY CARRIED, the minutes of the regular meeting and work session held on February 16, 2011, were approved as written – the roll call vote: all aye.

In re: Request of YMCA of Roanoke Valley, property owner, for rezoning a .34 acre portion of the property located at 1126 Kime Lane (Tax Map #148-1-2.1) from RSF Residential Single Family District to HBD Highway Business District with proffered conditions

The Executive Secretary reported that this date and time had been set to hold a public hearing to consider the request of YMCA of Roanoke Valley, property owner, for rezoning a .34 acre portion of the property located at 1126 Kime Lane (Tax Map #148-1-2.1) from RSF Residential Single Family to HBD Highway Business District with proffered conditions; and

WHEREAS, the Executive Secretary further reported that notice of such hearing had been published in the March 3 and 10, 2011, issues of The Roanoke Times, and adjoining property owners were notified by letter mailed March 4, 2011; and

WHEREAS, staff noted the following: the subject property consists of one parcel, located to the east of the Salem YMCA and directly to the south of the water tank; the property is approximately .34 acres, and is vacant except for a paved walkway; this request is to rezone the property to allow for the expansion of the existing YMCA; in accordance with the previous rezoning of the YMCA property, the petitioner has proffered the following conditions: 1) the only HBD Highway Business District uses for the property will be assembly halls, cultural services, personal

improvement services, and day care center, which may be provided by a medical facility, and 2) the facility will be built in substantial compliance with the drawings submitted at the March 16, 2011, Planning Commission hearing; and the only issue staff has is “How will the paved walk connecting to the parking lot be relocated?”; and

WHEREAS, Richard Rife with Rife and Wood Architects, representing the Salem Family YMCA, appeared before the Commission in support of the rezoning request; he noted that Mark Johnson, branch director of the Salem Family YMCA, was also in attendance, and he will speak a little later; he presented a copy of the existing site plan and explained the current property is shown on the plan in white with the existing building in gray; he further explained that Salem City Council recently donated an additional portion property to the Y to allow them to expand and noted the property on the plan as well as the proposed addition; he stated that the existing Y property is zoned HBD Highway Business District, and the additional property which was donated is currently zoned RSF Residential Single Family; they are requesting the Planning Commission recommend a rezoning to HBD for that portion of the property so they can move forward with the proposed expansion; he also presented a floor plan and noted there are two components of the project, one is to construct a new wellness center, approximately 9,000 square feet, which is roughly double the size of the current wellness center; the second component is to subdivide the current wellness center into a new large group exercise space, new cycling room, and a new expanded area designated primarily for teenage activities; and he noted that the proposed addition and interior changes will allow the Y to expand its programming and to be able to take care of the needs of its members more efficiently; and

WHEREAS, Commission Member Carter noted he had one concern; there is an existing old road that was there before the YMCA, and the proposed building is going to go over part of the road way; he asked if the Y was proposing to put the road back so that it will connect once the construction is completed; Mr. Rife noted that he has been instructed to keep this path operable, but they do not have the exact routing of the path worked out at this time; Mr. Rife further discussed two options for the proposed addition and depending on which option they select, this will determine where the path will be re-routed; Commission Member Carter said he thought that at any time during construction the path is blocked, both ends should be marked that the path is not accessible; Mr. Rife noted that they would have to check into the logistics of keeping vehicular access to the construction site, safety, etc.; and

WHEREAS, Mark Johnson, Branch Director of the Salem Family YMCA, appeared before the Commission in support of the request; he noted any time the Y considers programs or expanding, the first thing they think about is will the proposed changes strengthen the community; the Y is a community organization and is here to make Salem stronger; this is the kind of filter that they use for everything they do; there are three ways that they try to do this, including youth development; an example is the summer camp program; he noted that last summer they had 270 children attend the summer camp program and they put them in every hallway, nook and cranny they could to fit in this many kids; with the proposed expansion and internal changes they are going to make, they will be able to almost double the capacity for summer camp; another way they strengthen the community is healthy living; he further noted that he is there every day and sees all the people who come into the wellness center and group exercise areas; people come here to exercise because they want to do better and be better; both of these areas will be expanded, and the proposed changes will increase their capacity by approximately 75%; further, he thinks we can all agree the stronger and healthier people are, the stronger the community; the last way they strengthen the community is social responsibility; this is done through their financial assistance program; as we all know, life throws curve balls, and at any moment any of us could be in need and require assistance; the Y believes that when people are in the position to need assistance this is when they need what they do there at the Y the most, such as the friendships, etc.; at the present time they have 345 families at the Salem Y that are receiving financial assistance to be members and to have their children participate in programs; the Y is very proud of this fact; last year by the finish of the year they had given \$252,000 in financial assistance; this expansion will help them to do a lot more; further, these are some of the real tangible things that will happen, and everyone here wants to make the community stronger; and the proposed expansion will certainly give them a wonderful tool to help them do this; and

WHEREAS, Commission Member Robertson asked if the financial assistance that he mentioned includes membership and activities at the Y without cost; Mr. Johnson noted that the families are required to pay a portion of the membership cost; he noted that the assistance is primarily for membership; the applicant has to provide them with basic financial documents so they can get a sense of their financial situation, and then they use a scale very similar to the federal poverty scale and give a percentage off of the membership to make it more affordable; he noted that a family membership is normally \$73 or \$74, and it is reduced to the low to mid 20s in a lot of

cases; he further noted that once they have established the need for assistance, the families are given the assistance across the board for anything they want to do at the facility; and

WHEREAS, Commission Member Robertson noted that the Y seems to be off and running big for the last year or two; he asked if he has seen a tremendous growth over the last couple of years in activity and membership; Mr. Johnson noted that obviously the economy for the past two year has been very interesting, and their total number of members has actually decreased somewhat during this time; but the usage is almost identical to what it was before it started, which right now is close to 900 people a day; and their programs have actually increased during this period of time; they are finding that a lot of people still want to participate in the programs, swim lessons, and those types of things; further, a lot of Ys across the country are dealing with a lot less people coming through their doors; and Mr. Robertson noted that they are faring better than most, and Mr. Johnson agreed with him; and

WHEREAS, no other person(s) appeared related to said request;

ON MOTION MADE BY COMMISSION MEMBER ROBERTSON, AND DULY CARRIED, the Planning Commission of the City of Salem doth recommend to the Council of the City of Salem that the request of YMCA of Roanoke Valley, property owner, for rezoning a .34 acre portion of the property located at 1126 Kime Lane (Tax Map #148-1-2.1) from RSF Residential Single Family to HBD Highway Business District with proffered conditions be approved -- the roll call vote: all present - aye.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the same on motion adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Executive Secretary

Chairman